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ABSTRACT

This study surveyed political values, attitudes, and behavior of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans in the United States. This report describes U.S. Latinos as foreign-born, native (U.S.)-born, non-U.S. citizens, and U.S. citizens. The study used a household, in-person survey, in English or Spanish (interviewee's choice), of 1,546 Mexicans, 589 Puerto Ricans, 682 Cubans, and 598 non-Latinos. The survey was conducted between August 1989 and April 1990. Findings indicate that: (1) the U.S.-born have significantly higher levels of education, income, and job status than the foreign-born; (2) only the foreign-born speak mostly Spanish; (3) it is difficult to place any subgroup at any one point on the political spectrum; (4) ideologically, U.S. Latinos identify themselves as moderates or conservatives, although they support increased spending on many domestic issues; (5) Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans express strong commitment to and identification with their own national-origin groups, although the three together do not identify as one community or see themselves as similar culturally or politically; (6) despite widespread perceptions among Anglo political leaders, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans are generally well-incorporated into U.S. society; and (7) all U.S. Latinos are much more involved in general political activities and school-related activities than in voting. Four figures and four tables are included, among which are: "Education by National Origin and Nativity"; "U.S. Citizens and Residents Should Learn English" (reactions tabulated by national origin); "Objective of Bilingual Education" (reactions tabulated by national origin). (JB)

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LATINO NATIONAL POLITICAL SURVEY

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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The Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) was conducted under the auspices of the Inter-University Program for Latino Research. Funding for this project comes from the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller, Spencer, and Tinker foundations.

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Latino Voices:
Mexican, Puerto Rican, & Cuban Perspectives on American Politics
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Louis DeSipio
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NOTE TO READERS

This report describes U.S. Latinos in terms of four categories: foreign-born and native (U.S.)-born, non-citizens and citizens. For the purposes of this study, the foreign-born include Puerto Ricans born in Puerto Rico.

The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably when referring to more than one national-origin population. We refer to all persons of Mexican origin as "Mexican(s)," all persons of Puerto Rican origin as "Puerto Rican(s)," and all persons of Cuban origin as "Cuban(s)."

Part 2 of this report, **DEMOGRAPHICS**, compares the characteristics of the immigrant and native-born populations.

Parts 3 to 6 focus on the attitudes and behavior of Hispanic citizens, the population usually described in national surveys.

The perspectives of non-citizens are presented in Chapter 10 of Latino Voices.

Throughout this Summary, table numbers are included to provide the reader with greater detail on specific findings. Table numbers correspond to data presented in Latino Voices.

INTRODUCTION

Our findings on ethnic identities address an important question, which is currently under debate in a number of political and intellectual circles: What should U.S. Hispanics be called? The results of the survey suggest several answers.

Above all, the preferences of the people themselves should be respected. When the national origin of a group is known, that term should be used. In South Texas and Los Angeles, for example, "Mexican-American" is much more descriptive than "Hispanic." Where two or more groups live together, terms such as "Hispanic" or "Latino" may be appropriate, but communities rather than community may be the best choice, e.g., the Hispanic communities of New York, or the Latino communities of Houston.

The LNFS data also suggest that while there may be a foundation for the creation of a "pan-ethnic" identity that includes Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans, such a move will require respect for national-origin distinctiveness. It also depends on a recognition that what U.S. Hispanics have in common is more a function of their place in American society than of an alleged Latin American or Hispanic cultural heritage.

Part 1

METHODOLOGY

- This is the first national survey on the political values, attitudes, and behavior of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans in the United States.

- This household, in-person survey overcomes a potential bias of telephone surveys, which exclude many Latino households without telephones.

- The survey was conducted between August, 1989 and April, 1990.

- Hispanic respondents had the choice of being interviewed in English or Spanish; 60 percent selected Spanish.

- The sample includes 1,546 Mexicans, 589 Puerto Ricans, and 682 Cubans, and is representative of 91 percent of the three Hispanic populations. The survey does not include Latinos living in states with populations that are less than 5 percent Hispanic. In states with populations that are at least 5 percent Hispanic, the survey also excludes Latinos living in census tracts that are less than 3 percent Hispanic.

- LNPS also interviewed 598 non-Latinos, including 456 non-Hispanic whites (Anglos) who are representative of the Anglos in the areas included in the survey.

- LNPS defines a person as a Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban if he or she, one parent, or two grandparents were solely of Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban ancestry. Only one person surveyed combined these heritages.

- The sample provides previously unavailable baseline data that enable us to answer the following questions:

  * What are the fundamental political values of U.S. Latinos?
  * How do gender, immigration history, age, citizenship, ethnic characteristics and socioeconomic status affect these values?
  * How uniform are these values across national-origin groups?
  * What patterns characterize Hispanic political attitudes and behavior, and what are the principal factors shaping these?
  * Is there a distinct Latino, as opposed to Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban political community in the United States? If not, is there a basis from which such a political community may emerge?
  * What are the significant differences and similarities in political values, attitudes, and behavior among these three Latino populations, and between them and Anglos?

Part 2

DEMOGRAPHICS

Native- and foreign-born Hispanics differ so significantly on all key demographic characteristics that it is essential to distinguish between the two whenever discussing Hispanic socioeconomic characteristics and public policy needs.

- Among all Hispanic groups, the U.S.-born have significantly higher levels of education, higher family incomes and higher-status jobs than the foreign-born (Tables 2.9, 2.17, 2.20).

- Among all Hispanic groups, it is only the foreign-born who speak mostly Spanish.

- The overwhelming majority of the native-born speak mostly English or are bilingual. This is especially true among Mexican-Americans (Tables 2.28, 2.29).

- The foreign-born are more likely than the U.S.-born to be Catholic and to indicate they receive "a great deal" of guidance from their religion. Anglos are more likely than any Hispanic group to say they receive a great deal of guidance from their religion (Tables 2.23, 2.25).

- Among U.S. Hispanics, those who are U.S.-born and speak mostly English have education and income levels that are closer to those of Anglos than to those of Latinos who are foreign-born and speak mostly Spanish.

    * Cubans born in the U.S. who speak mostly English report much higher levels of education and income than Anglos. This is a small (4 percent) but growing proportion of the total Cuban-origin population.

    * Although U.S.-born Puerto Ricans who speak mostly English (16 percent of the Puerto Rican-origin population) report slightly higher levels of **education** than Anglos, Anglos report substantially higher **incomes**.

    * Mexicans born in the U.S. who speak mostly English (27 percent of the Mexican-origin population) have slightly lower levels of education and income than Anglos.

- The poorest and least-educated segment of each national-origin group are those who are foreign-born and speak mostly Spanish. They constitute 37 percent of the U.S. Mexican population, 32 percent of U.S. Puerto Ricans, and 64 percent of U.S. Cubans.

Part 3

THE LATINO POLITICAL AGENDA

It is difficult to place Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, or Cubans at any one point on the political spectrum. Ideologically, they tend to identify themselves as moderates or conservatives, yet they support increased spending on many domestic issues, traditionally a liberal position. They also hold mixed views on issues such as abortion, affirmative action, and the death penalty.

- Just 29 percent of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans and 23 percent of Cubans rate themselves as liberal, compared to 36 percent of Mexicans, 47 percent of Puerto Ricans, and 55 percent of Cubans who view themselves as conservative (Table 6.7).

- Cubans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans support a liberal domestic policy agenda. These responses are what we expect from Mexicans and Puerto Ricans; given their image as loyal Republicans, however, it is unexpected that Cubans hold these views.

  * By substantial majorities, each group supports increased government spending on health, crime and drug control, education, the environment, and child services (Table 7.3).

  * Contrary to the assumptions of many advocates of English as the official U.S. language, few U.S. Hispanics believe the purpose of bilingual education is to maintain Spanish language and culture. Instead, most believe the purpose of bilingual education is to foster English proficiency, and they are willing to pay more taxes to achieve this goal. (Table 7.19).

  * On those issues where it is possible to make comparisons with Anglos, each Latino group is notably more liberal, i.e., more supportive of government spending, than are Anglos.

  * Approximately 90 percent of each national-origin group sees government as being responsible for solving national and local problems (Table 6.8).

- In contrast with widely held stereotypes, U.S. Hispanics **do not** support traditional roles for women.

  * Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans are more likely than Anglos to agree that women are better off if they have careers than if they stay home (Table 7.33).

- * Substantial majorities of each group agree that women are at least as capable as men of holding public office (Table 7.34).

- * While most U.S. Hispanics believe that both parents should share child-raising responsibilities, higher proportions of each national-origin group think that men rather than women should stay home with the children if that is necessary, even if that limits their careers (Table 7.35).

o Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans are divided on affirmative action, abortion and capital punishment.

- * Slightly more Mexicans prefer merit-based hiring and college admissions to quotas (39 percent versus 31 percent); slightly more Puerto Ricans support quotas over merit-based hiring and admissions (34 percent versus 31 percent); but close to two-thirds of Cubans prefer merit-based hiring and admissions. (Table 7.36.)

- * Only 17 percent of Mexicans, 26 percent of Puerto Ricans, and 14 percent of Cubans voice unequivocal opposition to capital punishment.

- * A slight majority of Mexicans (53 percent) and Puerto Ricans (51 percent) opposes abortion absolutely or would permit it only in cases of rape or incest, as compared to 55 percent of Cubans who would permit abortion for medical reasons or for any reason (Table 7.38).

Part 4

ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans express strong commitment to and identification with their own national-origin groups.

  * The overwhelming majority of each group prefers national-origin labels such as Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban (Table 2.27).

  * The majority of each group thinks that all three groups, and theirs in particular, experience "a lot" to "some" discrimination (Tables 7.10 - 7.12). The only exception is that a majority of Cubans thinks that Cubans experience "a little" or no discrimination.

  * Substantial majorities of each group agree that co-ethnics should help each other (Table 9.1) and large majorities of each group agree that they benefit personally when a co-ethnic does well.

  * Of those who have had the opportunity to do so, over 75% of each group has voted for a member of their own group over a non-Hispanic (Table 9.12).

- Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans do not identify as one community, nor do they see themselves as very similar culturally or politically.

  * Few Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans prefer to call themselves by "pan-ethnic" terms such as Hispanic or Latino. Indeed, those who prefer "Hispanic" outnumber those who prefer "American" only slightly, while those who prefer "American" exceed those who identify as "Latino" (Table 2.27).

  * The overwhelming majority of each group has little or no contact with individuals from the other groups (Tables 4.13 - 4.15).

  * Most Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, and nearly half of Cubans agree that all Latinos are "somewhat similar" culturally. However, each group, and Cubans especially, are more likely to say Latinos are "not very similar" than to say they are "very similar" culturally (Table 9.19).

  * Almost half the members of each group think that their group's political concerns are not very similar to the political concerns of the other groups (Tables 9.20 - 9.22).

Part 5

AMERICAN ATTITUDES AND VALUES

As measured by their widespread use of English and their social and political attitudes, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans are generally well-incorporated into American society. This stands in apparent contradiction to the views that Anglo political leaders and the American public hold about Latinos.

- The linguistic patterns of each group reflect the differences in their historical experiences (Tables 2.28 - 2.29, 4.8 - 4.9).
  - Fewer than one percent of native-born Mexicans speak only Spanish; a greater number are more proficient in English (59 percent) than are bilingual (24 percent); and 8 percent speak only English. Less than 12 percent use Spanish as their primary language at home, compared to 63 percent who speak mostly English in the home.
  - Approximately two-thirds of U.S.-born Cubans are primarily English-speakers, while only 4 percent mostly speak Spanish. English is the dominant language used at home for 31 percent of Cubans, compared to 34 percent who speak mostly Spanish at home.
  - A majority (68 percent) of U.S.-born Puerto Ricans use English as the primary language. Nearly half primarily speak English at home, compared to the 18 percent who use mostly Spanish in the home.
- Although many Hispanics, especially Mexicans, report that they have experienced discrimination in the United States, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans have positive social relations with Anglos.
  - Almost 40 percent of Mexicans, 30 percent of Puerto Ricans, and close to 20 percent of Cubans indicate they have personally experienced discrimination based on their national origin (Table 7.5).
  - Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans express favorable attitudes toward Anglos. Indeed, they express greater closeness to Anglos than to Latinos from groups other than their own (Table 4.16).
  - Among the native-born, each group is more likely to marry an Anglo than an Hispanic of a different national origin (Table 2.6).

- Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban citizens overwhelmingly express support for U.S. political institutions and policies.
  - 84 percent of Mexicans, 69 percent of Puerto Ricans, and 88 percent of Cubans express extremely strong or very strong love for the United States (Table 6.1); 92 percent of Anglos voice this sentiment (Table 6.1).
  - 91 percent of Mexicans, 83 percent of Puerto Ricans, 92 percent of Cubans and 92 percent of Anglos are extremely proud or very proud of the United States (Table 6.2).
  - 40 percent of Mexicans, 41 percent of Puerto Ricans, 49 percent of Cubans and 35 percent of Anglos express a high degree of trust in government (Table 6.3).
- None of the Hispanic groups expresses a distinct foreign policy orientation, and none expresses a particular interest in Latin America.
  - Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Anglos report equally favorable attitudes toward the United States (Table 7.32).
  - Mexicans and Cubans express much greater interest in U.S. politics than in Mexican or Cuban politics; Puerto Ricans express relatively high interest in Puerto Rican politics (Table 7.26).
  - Each group is less likely than are Anglos to favor establishing relations with Cuba (Table 7.27).
  - Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans do not differ significantly from Anglos in their feelings about Latin America. The Hispanic groups are not uniformly positive in their views, and in some cases view Great Britain more positively than they view Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba (Table 7.32).
- None of the groups is especially concerned about immigration (Table 7.1); none favors increased immigration; and none thinks immigrants from Latin America should have preference over immigrants from elsewhere (Tables 7.23 - 7.25).

Part 6

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND PARTISANSHIP

- While there are differences in participation among the three Latino national origin groups, compared to Anglos, Hispanics overall are much more involved in general political activities and school-related activities than in voting.
  - Between 20 percent and 30 percent have participated in political activities such as signing petitions or wearing campaign buttons. More Mexicans than Cubans have participated in such activities (Table 8.18).
  - More than half of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans have participated in school-related activities, but less than 40 percent of Cubans have done so (Table 8.12). Mexicans and Puerto Ricans are involved in school activities at rates similar to those of Anglos.
- Among Latinos who are U.S. citizens, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans report high rates of registration, but low voting rates.
  - Approximately 75 percent of each group has been registered to vote at some time (Table 8.13).
  - A majority of each group was not contacted to register in 1988 (Table 8.15).
  - Of those Latinos who were contacted to **vote**, 61 percent of Mexicans, 61 percent of Puerto Ricans and 63 percent of Cubans went to the polls.
  - In 1988, among Mexicans and Puerto Ricans who were U.S. citizens, the non-voters exceeded the voters. Among Cubans, voters outnumbered non-voters two-to-one (Table 8.17).
- Hispanics are not a coherent voting bloc.
  - A majority of Mexicans (60 percent) and Puerto Ricans (64 percent) are Democrats. By contrast, 64 percent of Cubans are Republicans (Table 8.24).
  - To the extent that there is a shift in party affiliation, it is from the Democratic to the Republican party. This is evident among both Mexicans and Cubans (Table 8.25) and reflects the historically small number of Republicans in these two groups.

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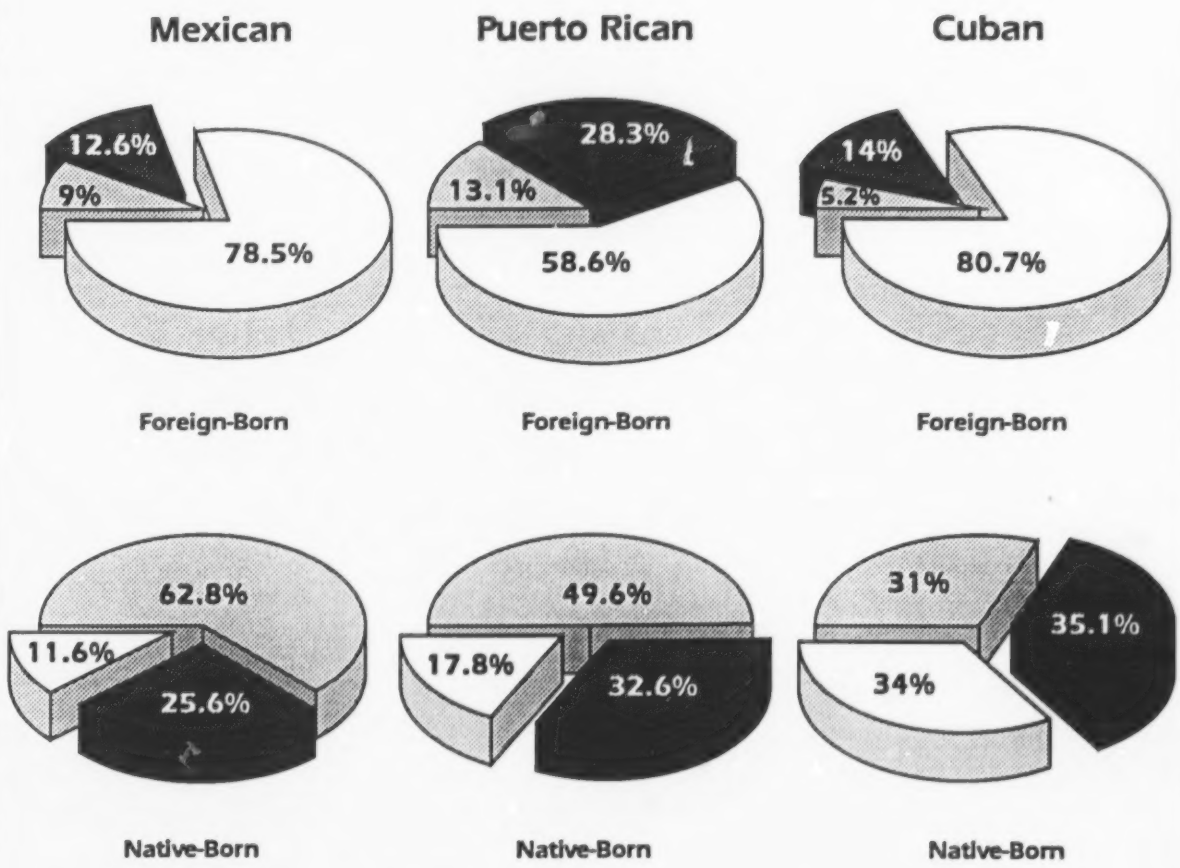
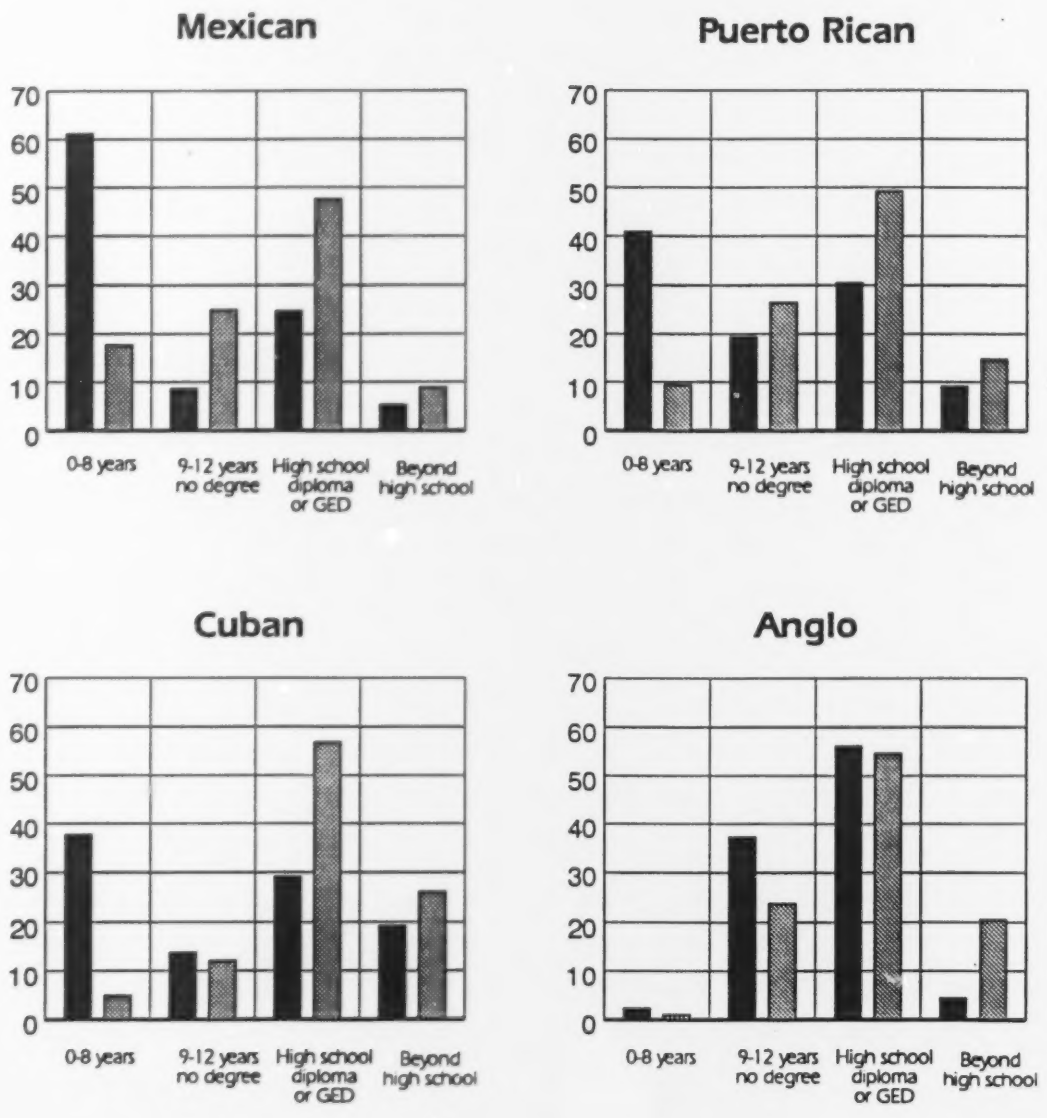
Home Language of Respondent by National Origin and Nativity



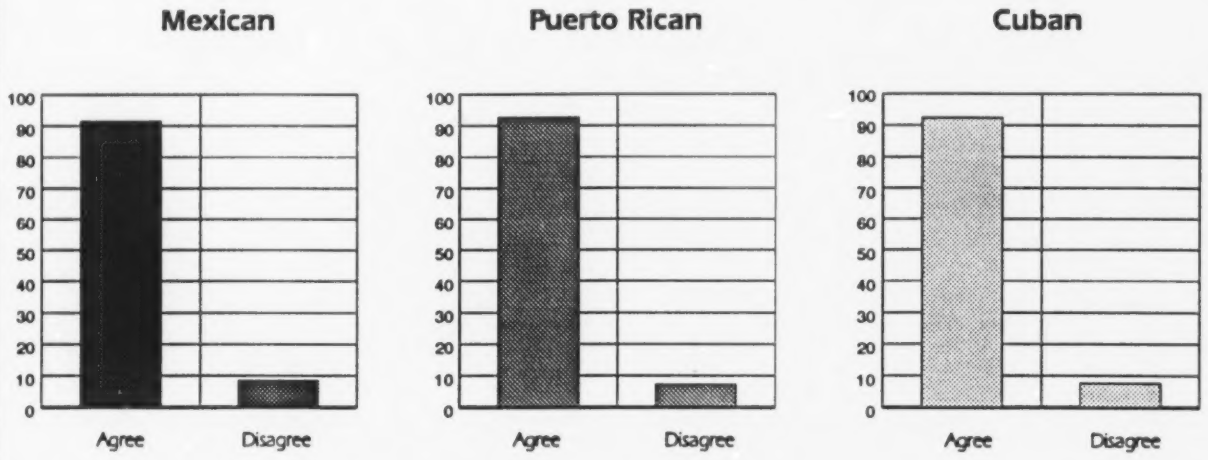
Source: Latino National Political Survey

Education by National Origin and Nativity

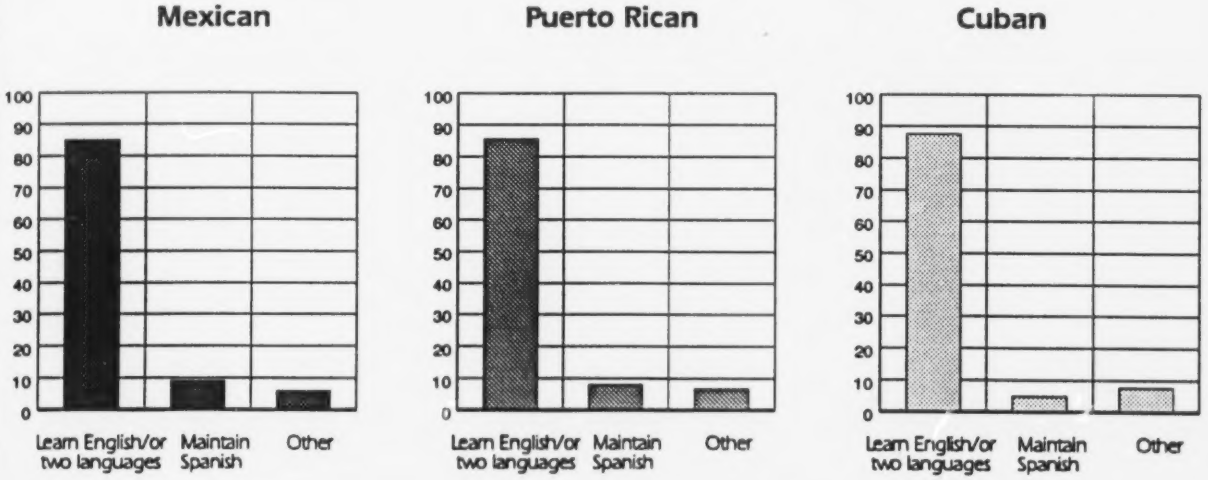


Source: Latino National Political Survey

U.S. Citizens and Residents Should Learn English, by National Origin

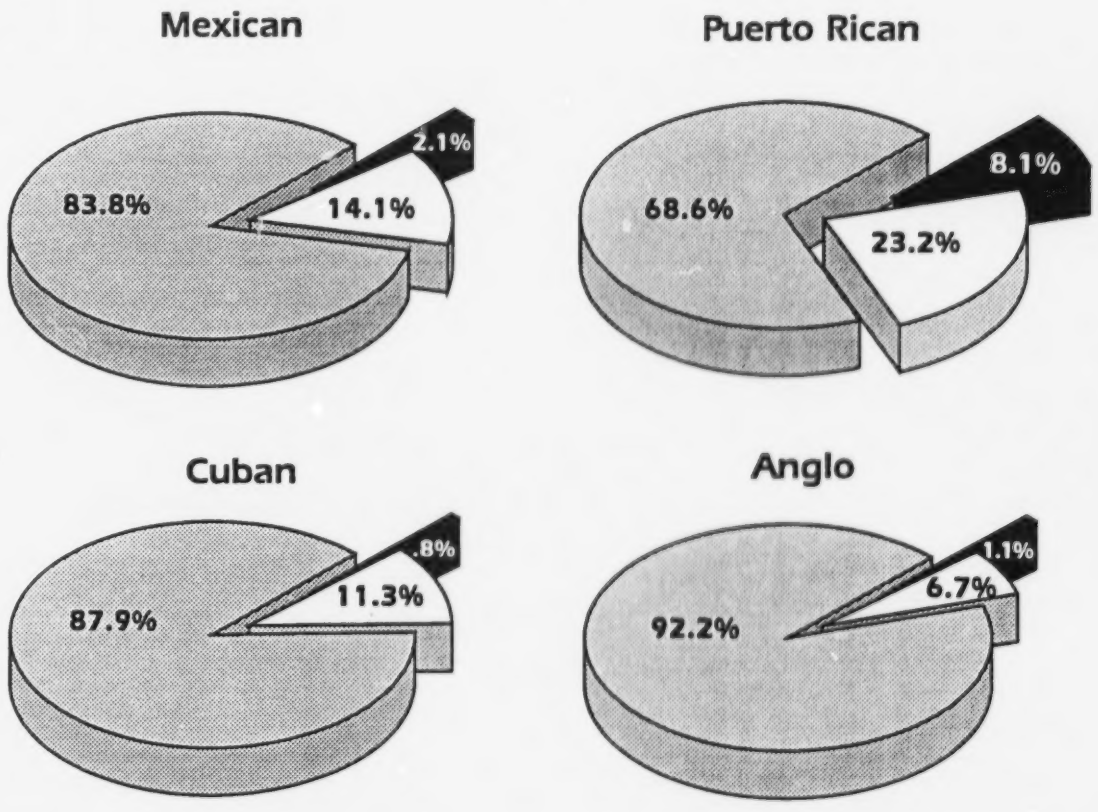


Objective of Bilingual Education, by National Origin



Source: Latino National Political Survey

Love for the United States by National Origin



Source: Latino National Political Survey

Personal Experience with Discrimination, by National Origin

Respondent Discriminated Against Because of National Origin	*Mexican*	*Puerto Rican*	*Cuban*
Yes	38.8%	30.0%	17.8%
No	61.2%	70.0%	82.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Perception of Discrimination Against Mexican Americans, by National Origin

Degree of Discrimination Against Mexican Americans	*Mexican*	*Puerto Rican*	*Cuban*	*Anglo*
A lot	32.1%	36.1%	24.0%	22.3%
Some	47.9%	39.3%	38.7%	47.4%
A little	15.0%	15.7%	17.1%	22.8%
None	5.1%	9.0%	20.3%	7.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Perception of Discrimination Against African Americans, by National Origin

Degree of Discrimination Against Blacks	*Mexican*	*Puerto Rican*	*Cuban*	*Anglo*
A lot	43.6%	57.5%	29.9%	31.2%
Some	39.9%	28.4%	35.0%	52.7%
A little	12.9%	9.0%	14.3%	11.9%
None	3.6%	5.1%	20.9%	4.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Latino National Political Survey

HISPANIC, LATINO AND AMERICAN AS PREFERRED IDENTITIES

	MEXICAN		PUERTO RICAN		CUBAN	
	Foreign Born	Native Born	Foreign Born	Native Born	Foreign Born	Native Born
Hispanic	4.0%	17.7%	2.3%	5.5%	1.6%	13.6%
Latino	3.8%	1.3%	1.0%	1.5%	2.6%	0.0%
American	0.4%	9.8%	2.8%	21.6%	4.5%	38.6%

Source: Latino National Political Survey

About the Principal Investigators of the Latino National Political Survey:

RODOLFO O. DE LA GARZA is Mike Hogg Professor of Community Affairs in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. The Principal Investigator of the **Latino National Political Survey**, he also initiated and directed three other major studies of Latino politics: **From Rhetoric to Reality, Latinos in the 1988 Election** (Westview Press, 1992); **Barrio Politics: Latinos in the 1990 Elections** (Forthcoming); and **Do Latino Votes Count? Latinos in the 1992 Elections**. He has published extensively on Mexican American politics, Latino politics, and U.S.-Mexican relations.

ANGELO FALCON, a Co-Principal Investigator of the **Latino National Political Survey**, is President and Founder of the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy, a nonprofit and nonpartisan policy center based in New York City. In 1984, he created the **National Puerto Rican Opinion Survey** (NPROS), the longest-running continuous survey of Puerto Rican leadership opinion in the United States. He has published in **New Community** and the **Hispanic Journal of the Behavioral Sciences**. He recently co-edited the volume, **The Puerto Rican Exception: Persistent Poverty and the Conservative Social Policy of Linda Chavez** (1992).

- More -

Mr. Falcon serves as trustee of the New York Foundation of the Community Service Society of New York, Executive Committee Member of the Board of Directors of Human Serve and 100% Vote, Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Support Center of New York, and is on the Editorial Advisory Board of the **Journal of Hispanic Policy** at the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

F. CHRIS GARCIA, a Co-Principal Investigator of the **Latino National Political Survey**, is a professor of political science at the University of New Mexico. His research and teaching interests are in the area of American Politics, particularly Hispanic politics, public opinion, political socialization, campaigns and elections, and educational policy. He is author of many articles and chapters on these and other topics as well as author or editor of several books, including **The Political Socialization of Chicano Children** (1973), **La Causa Politica** (1974), **New Mexico Government** (1976, revised 1981), **The Chicano Political Experience** (1977), and **Latinos and the Political System** (1988).

JOHN A. GARCIA, a Co-Principal Investigator of the **Latino National Political Survey**, is an associate professor of political science at the University of Arizona, where he is Department Head. During 1978-1980, he was involved in the **National Chicano Survey**, the first national probability survey of Mexican-origin populations in the United States. His published works are found in a wide variety of social service journals, and as book chapters in collections that deal with ethnic politics, local government, and public policy. He co-authored the chapter on Black and Latino politics in the forthcoming edition of the American Political Science Association's volume on the state of the discipline.

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